

DRAFT

USMS National Open Water Sanction Process

Introduction

At the July 2010 meetings, the U.S. Masters Board of Directors discussed a proposal for a uniform open water sanction application. At the time, "Jeff [Moxie] reiterated that the Open Water Committee needs to develop sanctioning guidelines for running open water events." (*Minutes of USMS BOD July 10, 2010 Meetings, pg. 8, <http://www.usms.org/admin/minutes/bod-2010-7-10-1.pdf>*).

The BOD conveyed this request to the Open Water committee. Accordingly, the committee is developing a uniform sanction process that ensures USMS sanctioned open water events are well run, safe, valuable to swimmers and beneficial to USMS, LMSCs and event hosts. The remainder of this document contains a concept for implementation of that process.

Current State of Open Water Sanctioning

At this time, open water sanctioning and event management is done at the LMSC level. Sanction legislation is under the jurisdiction of the Legislation committee. Otherwise, there is no national apparatus managing or monitoring sanction activity.

Glenda Carroll conducted a survey of the LMSCs to determine how they were managing their sanction processes. Of the responding LMSCs, she found that Pacific Northwest Association (PNA) and Pacific Masters Swimming (PMS) have the most detailed sanction requirements. The majority of LMSCs use what is on the USMS website for open water sanctioning. If an LMSC has a performance bond, it ranges from \$25 to \$250. Some sponsoring clubs pay the LMSC an amount per swimmer (less than \$2.00); most don't. Results are expected to be reported to the sanction/results chair anywhere from 72 hours to 14 days after the event. Virginia LMSC makes an effort to include swims hosted by USA-Swimming.

Sanction Legislation Proposal

The need for a uniform sanction process is related to legislation proposals (L2 and L3) that separate open water sanction code from pool code in Part 2 of the rule book; establishes a national sanction process with oversight and support at the national level and administration at the LMSC level; requires reporting of sanctions and event results to the national level for inclusion in the calendar of events and event results database; provides a complete open water liability release in a single location; and provides for a common sanction fee structure.

National Open Water Sanction Coordinator

Many of USMS' major activities at the LMSC level (ex. registration, coaching, records, fitness, LMSC Development, etc.) have a counterpart at the national level—except for sanctioning and event management. Event management and development is one of our most important products, since it directly impacts the individual swimmers.

To implement a uniform sanction process, it would be useful to develop a national sanction coordinator position to work with the OW committee on the coordination of a uniform sanction process and event management. Tasks will include monitoring the implementation of the sanction process; mentoring LMSCs and event hosts; facilitating resolution of scheduling conflicts between LMSCs or within LMSCs; addressing LMSC requests for waivers of the basic sanction requirements; and facilitating the resolution of conflicts between all parties.

The coordinator will have direct responsibility for the sanctioning of events that are owned or sponsored by USMS, including national championships, H2Open events, SwimFest and future USMS clinics, camps and training programs. Consideration of the regular LMSC event scheduling needs must be taken into account when sanctioning a national event.

DRAFT

USMS National Open Water Sanction Process

The coordinator will work closely with the OW committee to evaluate the sanction process, see that it works smoothly and propose any necessary changes in the process, sanction legislation or any other aspect of USMS open water event management.

LMSCs

The LMSCs will be the primary administrators of the sanction process as it pertains to evaluating sanction applications, scheduling and managing events held in their LMSC. They will work with both the national sanction coordinator and the event hosts to see to the good operation of sanctioned events as specified in applicable USMS rules, legislation and policies. If LMSC needs are not addressed in the sanction process, they may apply to the sanction coordinator for relief.

Event Hosts

Events hosts will be required to run their events according to applicable USMS rules, legislation and guidelines. Hosts will be encouraged to develop their event to meet the needs of their customers.. The OW committee will develop educational materials to aid new events and promote the development of existing events. Mentoring services will be available for event hosts through experienced LMSCs, the OW committee and the national coordinator.

Sanction Agreement & Application

As part of the sanction application process, the event host and LMSC will sign a document agreeing to the requirements. See Appendix A—Sanction Agreement. The sanction application will serve as an application for sanction and a data collection process for end-to-end event management. See Appendix B—Sanction Application.

The contents of Appendix A and B were drawn from the USMS open water sanction application; USMS sanction legislation proposal; PNA sanction process; PMS sanction process; data collected for the USMS calendar; the needs of the USMS event results database and national swimmer ranking system; and discussions with the OW committee, LD committee, LMSC Development committee, LMSC open water chairs, LMSC sanction chairs, National Office staff and others.

Fees

This process needs to consider two types of fees—event entry fees and sanction fees. Setting of event entry fees will be at the discretion of the event hosts. The sanction fee structure will be determined after further discussion. Basically, there are three options:

1. No Fees—We would issue sanctions without accompanying fees.
2. Performance Bond—The event host puts up a bond and receives some or all of the bond back following an evaluation process.
3. Non-refundable Sanction Fee—The event host pays a fee that is not returned. USMS and the LMSC would share the revenue. This could be a flat fee or a per entrant fee or both, depending on the size of the event.

Technology

New technology needs to be developed to encompass the new sanctioning process and make it easier for the event host to complete their sanction application. The sanction application process should be automated as soon as possible and include the capability to encompass present and future event management needs. Those needs include larger and more complex event structures (ex. multi-race events, event series, and events which include a combination of types of activities—most notably events with a clinic attached).

DRAFT

USMS National Open Water Sanction Process

Open Water Practices and Clinics

The contents of this document focus on sanction considerations, but there is more to open water management than sanctioned events. Our current insurance coverage allows USMS entities to conduct open water practices and clinics (designated as organized practices) without a sanction. These types of open water activities have no safety requirements attached, since, to this point safety requirements are only relevant to sanctioned events. It should be noted that some practices and clinics are becoming quite large. For example:

1. COMSA runs open water workouts and can get up to 500 swimmers on Saturdays in July.
2. Curl-Burke Masters runs open water practices/clinics in the summer and is pushing 120+ swimmers and growing.
3. The Jim McDonnell Lake Swims (sanctioned event) include a clinic and 1-mile practice the day before the races. The clinic had 239 entries this year (170 actually swam).

Some of these practices and clinics are larger than sanctioned races. It is a complex issue that needs consideration. The OW committee will be adding practice and clinic information to the open water safety guidelines that will provide best practices for these activities. However, there is currently no method of requiring practices to conform to open water safety standards.

DRAFT

USMS National Open Water Sanction Process

Appendix A— Sanction Agreement

The LMSC and event host will sign a sanction agreement describing the rights and requirements of both parties. Below are lists of information that may be included in the final document. The form of this agreement (formal contract, letter of intent or simple sanction agreement) and its contents will be determined in discussions between the OW committee, sanction coordinator (if available), legal counsel, BOD and National Office open water staff.

LMSC Requirements

1. Schedule and support the host's event so it has an opportunity to thrive and provide value for the swimmers.
2. See that the event is reported to the national organization for inclusion on the USMS Calendar and other publicity.
3. See that the event is conducted according to all applicable USMS rules, legislation and policies.
4. Provide a liaison to the event who will work with the event host, attend the event and provide comments and suggestions to the event host as needed.

Event Host Requirements

1. Fill out sanction application completely, including any requested attachments. Any parts of the form not included in the initial submission must be completed by specified deadlines, but all must be submitted no later than 60 days prior to the event.
2. Submit payment for a non-refundable sanction fee of ___ dollars (TBD by USMS).
3. Conduct the sanctioned event according to all applicable USMS open water rules, legislation and policies including safety guidelines, medical guidelines, competitive guidelines, insurance requirements, financial requirements and legal requirements.
4. Prepare timely information for publicity to be included on USMS and LMSC web sites, newsletters, email newsletters and SWIMMER magazine, where applicable.
5. Submit official results to the open water even results database within 14 days after completion of the event
6. If USMS or the sanctioning LMSC has loaned the event equipment, it must be returned according to the use agreement between the parties.
7. Participate in a wrap-up discussion if requested by the LMSC liaison.

Miscellaneous

1. Specification of parties to the agreement.
2. Statement that both parties agree to abide by the requirements and specifications of the agreement.
3. Escape clauses for both parties.
4. Both the LMSC and the host will sign the agreement.

DRAFT

USMS National Open Water Sanction Process

Appendix B—Sanction Application

The sanction application will collect information for operating the event as well as data for the OW committee to promote events and track open water development. The sanction application will be reviewed and approved by the LMSC with assistance from the national sanction coordinator as needed. Until an automated sanction application process is available, a subset of the following information will be required.

Event Information

1. Event name
2. Event dates & times
3. Event location
4. Body of water
5. Event description
6. General information on water conditions
7. Event web URL
8. Online entry URL
9. Paper entry URL
10. Host organization
11. Event director name and contact information
12. Secondary contact name, title, contact information
13. Referee name, contact information and certification status
14. Insurance coverage—USMS full member, USMS OEVT, USA-Swimming (include USA-Swimming sanction and contact information)
15. Competitive/Non-competitive event
16. Fees schedule
17. Entry deadlines
18. Series participation
 - a. National championship series (identify race or races)
 - b. H2Open series
 - c. Regional USMS series (identify series)
 - d. Non-USMS operated national/regional event series (identify series)

Swim Information

1. Swims/clinics offered:
 - a. competitive swims
 - b. non-competitive swims
 - c. clinic (check all that apply)
 - i. includes open water practice swim
 - ii. includes classroom work
 - iii. includes pool practice
2. For each swim/clinic specify (as applicable):
 - a. national championship
 - b. type (relay, individual)
 - c. distance category
 - d. length of swim
 - e. scoring divisions offered
 - f. expected entries
3. Timing method
 - a. primary
 - b. back-up
4. Charitable event (identify charity or charities, if public)

DRAFT

USMS National Open Water Sanction Process

Additional Demographics/Marketing Information

1. Number of swimmer entries in previous year or—include all event activities (competitive, non-competitive, clinic swims, etc.)
2. Number of swim entries in previous year—include all event activities (competitive, non-competitive, clinic swims, etc.)
3. Expected swimmer entries this year
4. Expected number of swims
5. First year event (yes/no)
6. Number of years sanctioned
7. Charitable donations

Attachments

1. Sanction fee payment (if applicable)
2. Medical/Safety plans in accordance with the USMS safety guidelines.
3. Course description and maps
4. Event management plan in accordance with the USMS officials guidelines (optional????)
5. Authorization to use the venue from facility operators and/or enforcement agencies.
6. Paper entry form
7. Online entry information/form
8. Event publicity information

Deadlines

This section will contain the deadlines for submission of sanction information. Except for the event management plan and authorization from outside agencies, all information should be available when the application is received. Sanctions will be provisional pending completion of certain requested information (TBD).